



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 10, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FRANK CARLUCCI  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

SUBJECT: Western Airline Hijacking

It now appears doubtful that the Algerians will expeditiously return Western's \$500,000 and unlikely that they will punish or extradite the hijackers. These circumstances combined with the recent Czech hijacking, the Tel Aviv affair, and the boycott threat by IFALPA create an urgent requirement for action and a favorable international atmosphere for high level positive consideration of means for dealing with menaces to civil aviation security.

This morning, Under Secretary Johnson firmly stated our position to the Algerian charge. He indicated that we were now beginning to consult broadly with other nations on ways to deal with the overall problem of aviation security illustrated in the Western case (see attached telegram). This is the final bilateral approach we intend to make to Algeria before we instruct all posts to inform their host governments that we now intend to seek broader international action. We do not, however, exclude additional contacts with the Algerians.

We are now planning to pursue immediately an international action program aimed at three specific goals:

(a) Establishing formal international machinery to deal with future failures to punish hijackers or return planes, crews, passengers or property;

(b) Affirming the commitment of all nations to take necessary unilateral measures (including physical security measures) to make international aviation secure; and

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(c) Bringing international diplomatic pressure to bear on Algeria to resolve the Western case and exploring the possibility of a (government or private) boycott of air services.

Certain preliminary steps toward each of these goals have already been taken. These steps and our proposed further actions, are summarized below:

A. Establishing Formal International Machinery to Deal with Future Failures to Punish Hijackers or Return Planes, Crews, Passengers or Property.

In October 1970, ICAO passed a US resolution acknowledging the right of ICAO states to consult together to take actions, including the suspension of air services, against a state which failed to extradite or prosecute persons committing a hijacking for blackmail purposes. Since that time, the US and Canada have been seeking to establish a sanctions convention which would create implementing machinery for this resolution and would give clear warning to states in Algeria's position that their actions could be reviewed and dealt with internationally in relatively short order. Our efforts have been resisted by a number of countries, most actively the USSR and France.

We believe that the present circumstances, including IFALPA's express endorsement of the US-Canada approach may give us an opportunity to get the sanctions convention moving in ICAO. We have instructed our ICAO representative to seek support for this approach and have prepared an implementing resolution (see attached telegram). To give priority to this approach, two further steps will be required.

(a) We must disassociate our approach from a similar sanctions endeavor by Israel based on the Tel Aviv incident. Express connection with Arab-Israel politics will almost certainly spell defeat. To this end, we would seek to have Israel withdraw its proposal to ICAO or, alternatively (and less desirably) seek to have our resolution heard first. We are prepared to discuss this matter with the Israelis in Washington and Montreal on Monday morning.

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(b) We must make strong high level approaches to ICAO council members likely to be sympathetic in principle but concerned with their Arab relations. These states would include the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Belgium and Italy. We would also plan to coordinate with the Soviet Union and work with Czechoslovakia.

There is no guarantee that this effort would succeed, but we may never have a better chance to try it. The consequences of failure are somewhat mitigated by the fact that this is a standing rather than new, U.S. initiative. Also, we could fall back to a resolution calling for a special ICAO council meeting to consider implementation of the October 1970 resolution.

B. Affirming the Commitment of All Nations to Take Necessary Measures to Make International Civil Aviation Activity Secure.

We are actively exploring the possibility of placing the weight of the Security Council behind international cooperative efforts to ensure the safety of international civil aviation. In order to avoid a contentious Arab-Israeli debate on the LOD incident, which would probably force the Soviets and Chinese to oppose our proposal, we are working to develop support for a statement which could be endorsed by the Council without a formal meeting or debate.

We have, therefore, approached the Soviet delegation in New York with a view to developing a consensus resolution which would avoid the political aspects of recent hijacking incidents but express concern over and condemn the threat to lives stemming from hijacking or other interference with international civil aviation, call on states to take measures to suppress such acts and prosecute those who commit them, and to expand and intensify cooperative efforts in this field.

If we can obtain a consensus on this essentially hortatory statement, it should facilitate our task of moving ICAO and the international community to place into effect the existing conventions and move toward a convention which would invoke sanctions against offending states. It should also help if we decide now or later to seek cooperative sanction action outside the ICAO framework.

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Perhaps influenced by the commitment in the US-Soviet declaration and the recent hijacking incident from Czechoslovakia, the Soviet delegation has appeared receptive. We should have their response by Monday, June 12. If it is favorable we should have a good chance to obtain SC action on a consensus statement by the middle of the week. We informed the UK delegation of our proposal and their initial reaction seemed favorable.

C. Bringing International Diplomatic Pressure to Bear on Algeria to Resolve the Western Case and Exploring the Possibility of a (Government or Private) Boycott of Air Services.

We have already requested our posts in countries having air connections with Algeria (including France, Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia) to seek the assistance of those countries in resolving the Western case. By Monday we should know how much assistance we can expect in terms of diplomatic pressure. We could attempt to increase this pressure by a more public or wider effort but this might be counter-productive since it might dig the Algerians in harder and not impose a substantial cost deterrent on "revolutionary" states.

IFALPA (International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations) has called for a boycott of air services to and from Algeria by its members as well as a secondary boycott of those continuing to fly to Algeria. ALPA (American Pilots Association) strongly supports this initiative and we have not quarrelled with it in the way in which we have opposed the idea of a worldwide shutdown. We could continue to encourage this private initiative either by a public effort to secure the same result on a governmental basis or by private encouragement. A boycott, while perhaps creating short term political intransigence, would hurt and would substantially deter future actions of this kind. An IFALPA boycott was threatened at the time of the release of an El Al plane held by Algeria in 1968. On the other hand, any boycott which seems to be inspired by the US Government runs the risk of Arab countermeasures against US interests.

If we were to pursue a boycott on a government basis, we could do so in an ad hoc meeting convened under the October 1970 ICAO resolution. We would not seek to convene such a meeting unless:

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a) There was sympathy for action on the part of a number of states serving Algeria; and/or

b) We believed that the public and IFALPA pressure stirred by such a meeting would obtain meaningful results; or

c) Despite the possibility of failure, we wished to underline USG concern.

With respect to invitees, we could either:

a) Limit the meeting to states serving Algeria and the US as aggrieved party, or

b) Add other states with a major interest in international air transportation, e.g., Canada, Japan, UK, Netherlands, or

c) Broaden the consultations to include states interested in the Czech hijacking (i.e. those serving Germany) and reduce the focus on Algeria.



William B. Macomber, Jr.  
Deputy Under Secretary

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